

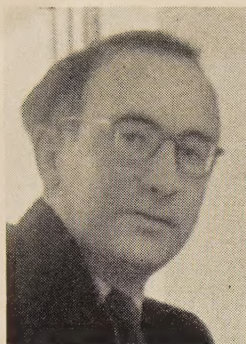
DECEMBER, 1958

Ballet

TODAY



MARGOT FONTEYN in *ONDINE*



Fernau Hall
London



Ferdinand Reyna
Paris



Hope Sheridan
New York



John Haylock
Tokyo

With the Season's Greetings from

BALLET TODAY

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER ESTELLE HERF

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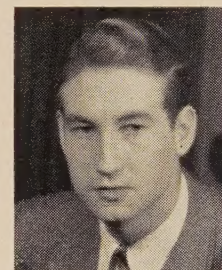
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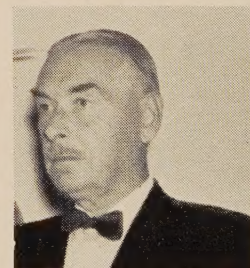
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In This Issue

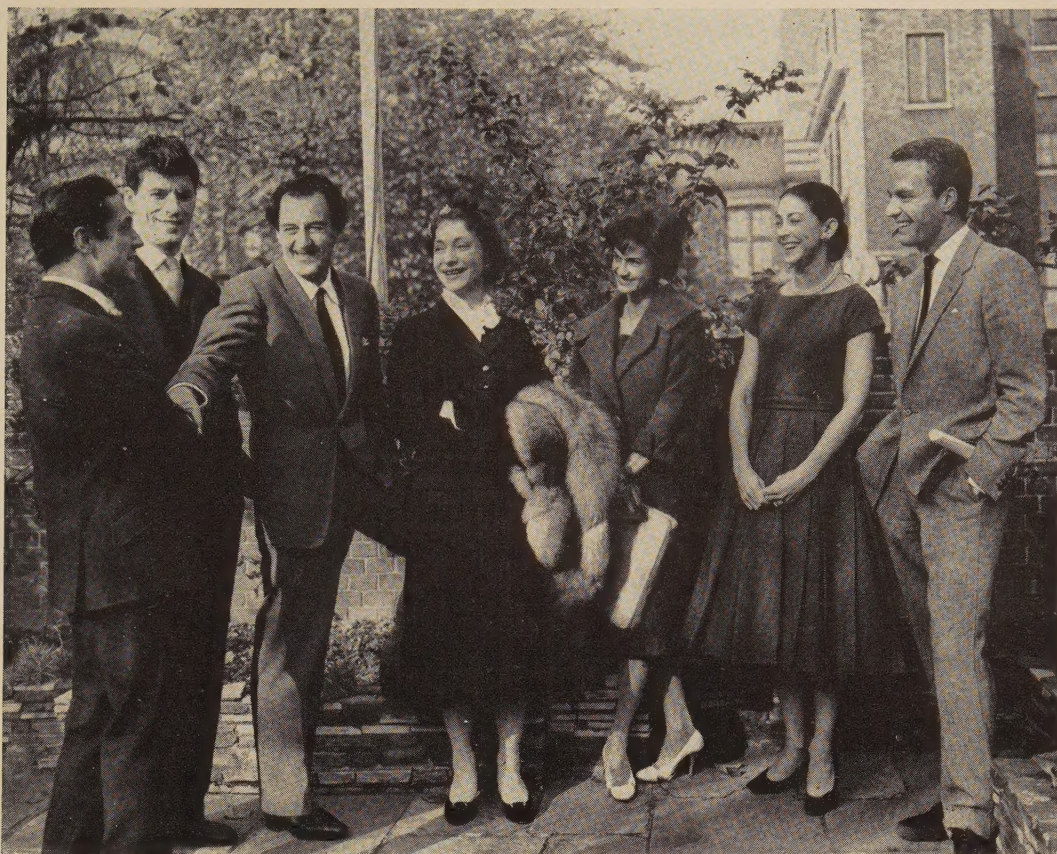
No. 10

Vol. II

Cover Portrait
Margot Fonteyn in *Ondine*
Photo: Houston Rogers

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The next issue is a combined one and will be published on 22nd January, 1959



A happy picture of some of the dancers taken at a press conference held in Dame Margot's London home prior to the Gala Matinée given in the presence of H.M. The Queen Mother and H.R.H. Princess Margaret in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing, on November 13th at the London Coliseum.

Left to right: Antonio, Michael Somes, Anton Dolin, Mona Inglesby, Anita Landa, Dame Margot Fonteyn and John Gilpin.

BACKSTAGE

AS I send Christmas and New Year greetings to you from London I know that at varying intervals during the month of December copies of our magazine will be reaching small towns and large cities on the Continent and Central Europe, and, with any kind of luck and by the miracle of modern transport, to the majority of the forty-nine States of America. But even whilst we, in London, Paris and New York are celebrating on Christmas Day, ships on the high seas will be carrying this issue of *Ballet Today* to vast continents like Australia and to little islands which only show as a speck on the map of the world.

It is a thought which is always with me, yet never ceases to amaze me, and I have asked myself how it is that a magazine produced in Surbiton, England, can have found its way into the furthestmost corners of the earth without the modern aids of giant advertising schemes and publicity.

What is the common denominator which makes this publication acceptable in a Royal Palace and the most humble home? Eagerly sought by a Roman Catholic priest in the Sudan furthering his missionary work by producing ballets with a religious theme, yet enjoyed and respected by eminent teachers of ballet? Read in war-torn cities and peaceful backwaters? By men of all colours and creeds whose political policies never reconcile them to each other?

It is not a profound question, the answer is simple. The language of the dancer knows no limitations, and by its expression a common meeting ground is established.

The common denominator of all peoples throughout the world is that they are brothers. If that fact was fully recognised it would not be necessary to have vast organisations which examine their problems yet fail miserably to solve them.

There have been many times in the past five years when I have asked myself if the frustrations of producing such a magazine under

interminable difficulties, and with no few personal sacrifices, is worthwhile, and then as if in answer to my doubts a blind woman in America writes to me to say that although she has never seen a ballet she looks forward eagerly to having the lives of dancers read to her every month. A man writes from New Guinea telling me that finding the magazine on a bookstall has encouraged him to take an interest in the ballet, and opened up, for him, a new world of beauty.

Such letters fill me with humility, and I am encouraged to hope that in recording with the help of my colleagues the work of great artists throughout the world, and even writing of those with only one foot on the bottom rung of the ladder of success, for a while we can forget the problems of everyday life in the love of an art which transcends material motives and desires in the aim for perfection.

Perhaps we have found a common denominator in the knowledge that there is something else to strive for other than being the first with the largest rocket.

FINNISH PRIMA BALLERINA IN LONDON

When Margaretha von Baur, prima ballerina of the ballet company of the Finnish State Opera, was offered a study grant by the Finnish Government, she made a decision which may well have a considerable effect on the history of Finnish ballet. Through the British Council she made arrangements to come to London for five weeks in September-October to study Benesh Dance Notation. She had intensive tuition for several hours every day from Rudolf and Joan Benesh (much of it in the library of the Royal Ballet School, through an arrangement kindly made by Arnold Haskell) and she mastered the whole of solo notation—a remarkable achievement.

Backstage continued on page 5



THE GREAT TRADITION

There is a difference of three-quarters of a century in their ages, but the teacher, Olga Preobrajenska, although now in her 86th year still passes on to the young pupils in her Paris studio the benefit of her vast experience as a great ballerina in the days of Imperial Russia

(See *The Great Tradition* opposite page)

THE GREAT TRADITION

EVERY morning a little old lady trips lightly down the Metro and makes her way across the boulevards to a studio in Paris. Once there she finds it hard to remain seated as she watches the young dancers, and before long she is on her feet encouraging, criticising, demonstrating. This is ballet's grand old lady, Olga Preobrajenska, affectionately known as "Preo."

At eighty-six Preobrajenska has earned the right to sit and dream about the past, but this pleasure she reserves for the time when classes are finished and she is in her apartment in Montmartre with her only companions, a cat and some canaries. Only then does she take out her treasures and allow her mind to drift back to the days when she partnered the great Nijinsky, and was a guest of the Tsar.

In the days before the Revolution Russian-born Preobrajenska was at the height of her fame as a ballerina. Having graduated from the Imperial School in St. Petersburg she became a prima ballerina in 1898, and in the ensuing years built up a reputation as one of the greatest dancers in the history of Imperial Russia.

One of "Preo's" treasures is a signed portrait of the ill-fated Nicholas, Tsar of all the Russias, and as she looks at it she will recall that once when the Tsar invited her to the Palace he pushed over a pile of gold coins and asked her to play cards with him, and she refused them saying that she "only gambled with her own money."

For a time Preobrajenska remained to teach at the Imperial School in St. Petersburg, and one of her pupils was Ulanova's mother, but when the Communists came to power, and after three years in Berlin, she left Russia for ever and made her home in Paris, where she opened a school which rapidly became famous throughout the world. During the years she has trained many of the greatest dancers of the last half-century, and few will leave Paris without first paying "Preo" a visit.

In 1955 she was decorated by the French Government with the Medal for Civil Merit, and to-day she is the only dancer of her day to have her name and story printed (twenty lines of it) in the Russian Dictionary of Biography.

Today her tiny feet encased in ballet shoes are seldom still, her expressive arms do not remain long at her side, and as she teaches, she remembers that once she was young and inexperienced and is determined to pass on the benefit of her great experience and knowledge to those who seek it... and so the great traditions of ballet are learned and passed on—from generation to generation.

BACKSTAGE—Continued

BRITISH TEACHER FOR IRAN

During October twenty-six year old ballet teacher Miss Ann Cox left by air for Teheran where her work will be to develop Iran's National Ballet Academy. She will be the first British teacher at the only school in Iran.

In 1956 Mr. N. Ahmadzadeh, Director of the National Ballet Academy, spent some time in the United Kingdom and met Dame Ninette de Valois. He asked if she could assist the ballet school in Teheran to develop on the same lines as the one she had started some years previously in Ankara.

Last Spring Dame Ninette went to Iran at the invitation of the Government to explore on the spot. She returned home and chose Miss Cox to go out and help the school.

Miss Cox, whose home is in Folkestone, is a graduate of the Teachers' Training course of the Royal Academy of Dancing and has experience of Royal Ballet School methods.

FRAGRANT GREETINGS

Something new in the way of Christmas cards has been dreamed up by Saville the well known perfumery firm. A box of six miniature Greetings Cards with full colour studies (by Baron and other well known photographers) of famous artists in scenes from popular ballets. Each photograph is mounted on a gold card $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ with a handbag phial of "Tutu" perfume. The box of six retails at 15/-, and a Greetings Envelope is supplied for each card. The photographs are of Fifi and Blair in *Casse Noisette*, Margot Fonteyn in *Swan Lake*, Danilova and Franklin in *Coppelia*, Violetta Elvin in *Sleeping Beauty*, Markova and Dolin in *Swan Lake* and Beryl Grey in *Cinderella*.

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

Invariably when watching the ballet I think "if only the camera would record that". But it is not as easy as all that, the photographer has many problems and even when he gets the perfect picture he still has the perils of reproduction to face. In these days of mass production time is the all-important factor, so that quality often suffers.

Throughout the years Serge Lido has set himself such a high standard in his yearly pictorial record of the dance that I am amazed each year to find he can do even better. His latest book *Ballet No. 8* will satisfy even the most critical and is a fine record of the principal dance events in the

countries of Europe (including our own Royal Ballet and Festival Ballet). There are also many striking action pictures of the Bolshoi taken when the Company appeared in Paris during 1958. No collection will be complete without this perfect example of the photographer's art. A review of the book appears elsewhere in this issue.

SPATE OF BOOKS

As a glance at our reviews in this issue will show, the number of books published on ballet in time for the Christmas trade increases every year, and unfortunately we have been unable to include all the reviews this month. The following will be included in our next issue:

Russian Ballet Master (The Memoirs of Marius Petipa). A. & C. Black 21s.

Adeline Genée (by Ivor Guest). A. & C. Black 30s.

Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield (by Cyril Swinson). A. & C. Black 7s. 6d.

The Royal Ballet To-day (by Cyril Swinson). A. & C. Black 7s. 6d.

Baron's Ballet Finale. Collins 42s.

A "Girl" Book—World Ballet. Hulton 12s. 6d.

Svetlana Beriosova (by A. H. Franks). Burke 25s.

PRICE INCREASE

Commencing with the first issue in 1959 we shall, unfortunately, have to increase the price of the magazine.

Although it has always been our aim to keep the price down to the lowest possible level in these hard times, the fact remains that even with the utmost economy we cannot make a profit, so that when we are faced with ever-increasing costs ultimately the decision has to be faced whether to cheapen the quality of the magazine or increase the price.

We believe that the readers would rather pay a little more. If you agree and continue to support us, then we hope to introduce more pages of reading matter and pictures on good quality paper and a number of interesting new features as well as continuing with the old favourites. The first of one of these new series commences with this issue—*Photographing the Ballet*.

Please remember the next edition is a combined one, and will be published on 22nd January, 1959.

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Back copies can also be obtained from *Ballet Today* office of all issues published during 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1958. For copies prior to this date please write for details before ordering.

NEW YORK

—WALTER SORELL

While the autumn season of the New York City Ballet and The American Ballet Theatre was in progress, Jerome Robbins had his own ballet season on Broadway. With his four ballets successfully running at the Alvin Theatre beside some of his old pieces in the repertory of the two major companies, he dominated the scene.

His *Fancy Free*, *Interplay*, *The Cage* and *The Pied Piper* are interesting stepping stones in Mr. Robbins' choreographic development leading to his latest preoccupation with jazz and the finding of a balletic idiom which speaks in understandable terms of the problems encountered by the American youth. Particularly in *Fancy Free* and *Interplay* he had already found a means of expression which is characteristically American, of our time and, in spite of its being storyless, most articulate. It strikes in us a frame of reference at once, the language used is the colloquialism we hear around the corner. Mr. Robbins creates out of the rigid forms of the classic ballet something that is full of immediacy and has the impulse of human experiences common to us today.

If he tells a story as in *The Cage* it is full of biting implications against our society. Mr. Robbins is a man of the theatre who dares to say what he sees and says it in an exciting way. All this makes him the most perfect choreographer for the problems concerning our youth as he has shown in *West Side Story* and now in his new ballet, *N.Y. Export: op. Jazz* which, undoubtedly, is a climactic point in his career.

The evening began with another new piece done for this occasion, *3x3*, to the music by Georges Auric. It was a weak curtain raiser. It seems that the music has misled him into staging something that was a poor imitation of his own inimitable genius. The best proof of how strong and fascinating the major work on this program was can be found in the fact that one forgot at once the fumbling beginning. *N.Y. Export: op. Jazz* is absorbing, haunting, brilliant. It is the fulfilment of what Jerome Robbins had to achieve one day after his several attempts to come closer and closer to an American ballet whose idiom emerging from a gripping jazz rhythm speaks in the every-day language of the new generation.

He caught this spirit in style and movement and he was greatly helped in it by Robert Prince's progressive jazz score and Ben Shahn's decor. The intriguing thing about this ballet is its dynamic simplicity, its growing intensity, the relationship of each dancer to the music and his belonging to an idea, as well as a group of dancers of whom each and all have their justification. The "Passage of Two" is a beautifully singing, slow movement and the entire dance, ending in an apotheosis of fervour and frenzy, creates an impressive image.

The company of young dancers gave a splendid and spirited performance, and, although they were all equally good, it may not be too unfair to single out Patricia Dunn, Wilma Curley, Jay Norman and Tom Abbott.

On May 18, 1957, a young Spanish dancer appeared in Carnegie Hall with his group for the first time and impressed the audience with his personal style. Sailors throw their hats onto the stage, the salvos of "olés"

REVIEWS

did not want to stop, and S. Hurok offered Roberto Iglesias a contract. A new Spanish dancer was born.

This success did not spoil him. On the contrary, his new programme which he presented on Broadway in a limited engagement was a great improvement over the one he has first shown. Mr. Iglesias' genius lies in his determination to fill the Spanish dance with creative and imaginative power, to raise its level of traditional techniques to artistry. And he greatly succeeds in what he set out to do. They are the literary qualities of the theatre values about which he is concerned, as he proved in his *Idolos de Arena* which is a little masterpiece of expressive dancing in a modern idiom with a Spanish accent.

The central figure is a Toreador. Roberto Iglesias is not interested in showing the bullfighter in his Carmenesque glory, but the goriness of his feelings, the ever recurring fears of death, the cruelty of the public in whose merciless fangs he feels caught, whose demands on him drive him into mounting anxiety and, finally, into the anguish of death. He speaks in dramatic symbols to us, and Death whom he must fight appears in the shape of a bull.

This is only one example of how he uses routine material and gives it new thematic twists, how he experiments with free movement and converts the obvious into the unusual. Even the traditional Zapateado, his *Punta y Tacon*, was done differently by him and Ana Mercedes, it had colour and content, and the impressive language of their heels was no longer mere fireworks of a brilliant technique. He not only puts dynamic power into his choreography which lends his pieces an unfailing intensity, he also endows them with meaning which lifts them from the customary level onto one of literacy.

It becomes obvious that he and his company are very familiar with the possibilities of the modern dance and also have a thorough knowledge of ballet technique. He uses, for instance, the floor as a means of dramatic expression as well as surprises us with leaps and lifts. Moreover, this "Ballet Español" is much aware of the theatrical effect of an imaginative scenic design which is always in good taste and more often than not stunning in its immediate impact. In the final number no company has yet succeeded in getting away from an ensemble piece which re-presents the acrobatic skills and virtuosités of each member in an usually trite setting. Mr. Iglesias knows how to give his show a finale that is new in its idea and execution and turns a bar-room scene into exciting theatre.

BALLET TODAY WILL WELCOME

News from the Dance World

AMSTERDAM

—JANET SINCLAIR

AMERICAN INVASION

The reassembling of the three Dutch companies after the summer holiday revealed as pretty a state of chaos as it would be possible to imagine, and no less than three American ballet masters. After the opening performances of the season Ine Rietstap, chief contestant for the title of Holland's leading dancer, left the Ballet der Lage Landen (ballet master, Blair Martin) and announced her retirement from the stage. This is a loss which could prove fatal to this troupe, for if the Ballet der Lage Landen is the Dutch equivalent of Ballet Theatre, then Ine Rietstap is the company's Nora Kaye: not yet thirty, it will be a tragedy if she persists in her decision to give up dancing, for she is as irreplaceable in nearly all her roles as Kaye in hers.

The Opera Ballet (ballet master at the time of writing, Dimitri Romanoff) which had been the focus of endless rumours since last March, emerged minus its previous Director and Ballet Master, Françoise Adret and Roland Casenave respectively, and under the direction of a former member of the corps de ballet, Johan Verdoner, with ballet master James Albright, the latter disappearing after three months' trial when Romanoff took over: since this appears to be roughly fifty per cent a new company, he will have an uphill task. Mr. Verdoner's only coup so far has been the acquisition of Marianna Hilarides, late prima ballerina of the Netherlands Ballet and the other main contestant for the position of Holland's leading dancer. This company seems, for no known reason, to be perpetrating the system followed during the regime of Mlle. Adret—that is, rehearsing twelve hours a day, six days a week, in order to perform once every couple of months. Just what advantage the Netherlands Opera could be said to derive from the ballet company which bears its name is anybody's guess: certainly the supply of good opera ballets seems to be the last aim in view.

The Netherlands Ballet also bobbed up with an American ballet master, Benjamin Harkavy. Shortly after his arrival to take up his position here Sonia Gaskell, Director of the company since its inception in 1954, resigned. Immediately after this was announced, one or two newspaper critics took the chance to attack Miss Gaskell in a manner contrasting most strikingly with the former general hymn of praise offered up to the achievements of this troupe. The critic of *Algemeen Dagblad*, after devoting a column to describing the reportedly chaotic conditions resulting from Sonia Gaskell's alleged determination to delegate absolutely no authority whatever, proceeded to remark "Is it necessary, artistically speaking, that Sonia Gaskell should return to the Netherlands Ballet? Not at all!" and mentioned his doubts whether her "hard style" was suitable to the Dutch dancer. The same writer also quoted Benjamin Harkavy to have said that when he saw a ballerina on the stage he expected that she should be first, a woman; secondly, an actress; and only thirdly a technical wonder. One can only agree with the writer of the article, who found it hard to believe that this philosophy would be reconcilable with the ideals of Miss Gaskell.

MUNICH

—DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN

The fall season of the Opera Ballet started very quietly and unpretentiously with an evening of *Begegnung*, *Purcell-Suite* and *La Dame à la Licorne*. None of the ballets was entirely new to Munich ballet-goers since the first two had been produced before at the Markgräfliches Theater at Bayreuth. The Cocteau-ballet having had its world première in Munich in 1953 after a long and successful series of productions all over the world—Berlin, New York, Buenos Aires—now returned as a permanent resident of the State Opera. Rosen was lucky to find again a young dancer in the company who proved well suited for the role of the unicorn. Helma Kühl is nervous, shy, with convulsively jerking thighs and a noble animal-like quality. She successfully stepped into a role that had been created by young Veronica Mlakar in her very first soloist part. Heinz Rosen's choreography still finds its way to our hearts. He does not touch us and then leave us to our own sentimentality. Rather he makes clever use of our sentiments almost approaching the limits of how much one can take. Since, however, he never transgresses these limits he makes full and legitimate use of his audience's capacity for drama. That is what I call a true theatreman! *Begegnung* (music by Werner Egk) is a ballet by Munich's demi-caractère dancer Franz Baur. Originally it had been set for the architecture of the Bayreuth Theatre which now is only represented through decor. Since the choreography is based on the original setting the ballet cannot live well on the Munich stage. The story is of a young girl (Annette Chappell) who in disgust isolates herself from her wild and superficially-minded playmates. She gives in to day-dreaming amidst the Baroque setting of the famous theatre. No wonder the figures which come to life and dance with her are representatives of that glorious period. But, alas, even these dim figures reveal disharmonies and distortion.—Except for some artistic lifts Baur's choreography remains unexciting since it does not clearly characterize the style of those of the past and those of the present (who, incidentally wear awful fitting trousers!). However, there is a strange pas de deux of the girl with a Prince which (like the knight in *La Dame*) is superbly danced by Heino Hallhuber. It is breathtaking to see him perform very stylish steps in such a way as if he is not real, or hadn't quite arrived yet at a prolonged consciousness. He dominates this pas de deux with absolute authority and blots out his partner.

If *Begegnung* is not of great impact, Joan Carter-Harris' *Purcell Suite* is unexciting in its first, gaining somewhat in its second part ("Hornpipe!" "Jig"!). This ballet suffers from being too similar in its general choreographic approach to *Begegnung*, and from the absence of a ballerina in the leading part. It is a divertissement—all too upright, clean-cut, straight-forward. The spark is missing! Anyway, Margot Werner and Monika Müller have been given a chance to prove how well dancers, even in not too glamorous parts, can sell themselves to an audience. After a financially successful Berlin season *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué* finally hit Munich. So we were not spared, and for professional reasons we had to go through a complete and unabridged version

—Continued at foot of next column

SANTIAGO

—LEON ZELDIS

On the 26th and 27th August two shows were given by Russian dancers. Although in all advertisements and notices the dancers were presented as coming from the "Bolshoi Theatre," the truth is that they proceed from the Opera Theatre of Tiflis, Georgia, U.S.S.R. None of the dancers speaks Spanish, but fortunately I speak a smattering of Russian, so that we could understand each other perfectly well.

The dancers, ten of them altogether, included a selection of the best in the Tiflis Opera Theatre. The Ballet director is Vakhtang Chabukiani, who is also one of the principal male dancers. First Ballerina of the company is Vera Zignadze. They do not carry stage decorations (they dance against a black backdrop) and very little in costumes.

The repertoire of the company is rather limited, and mostly restricted to classic works, such as *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*. An interesting work presented here was *Otello*, although the Director explained that it should be danced with a full company of at least 100 dancers in order to be effective. In addition to the two shows in Santiago the company also gave one in Vina del Mar. They received \$2,500 for each presentation.

Critical reaction was generally unfavourable, speaking of "frigidity" and "outdated ballet mannerisms." One critic declared that, although the company studiously avoided folkloric dances, everything they danced was folkloric in interpretation.

CAIRO

—WALENS

As part of the cultural instruction plan, l'Institut National pour le Ballet has been formed in Cairo under the direction of an eminent maître de Ballet sent expressly by the Soviet Union.

From some 450 candidates aged from 9-14 years, only about 20 were accepted. They are to follow a course of advanced studies with elementary music.

The Institute will train dancers for the Ballet and will also build up a group of instructresses to teach classical dancing in the State schools.

Qualifications for admission are very strict but there is no charge for instruction. The candidates will follow courses of exercises, six hours a week for five years, and will receive the official diploma as a ballerina and teacher of ballet with an engagement to dance for five years for the State.

Beginning October, the Ballet du Cairo will give a series of performances at the Cairo Opera.

MUNICH—Continued

of it. A whole year of satirical criticism had helped anyway to replace the normal ballet audience for one that normally seems to frequent such shows. There is one great puzzle. How can Toni Lander stand it to stay with this programme? I felt ashamed for her. Is Denmark's greatest living dancer to continue to frame vulgarity à la Noelle Adam?

PARIS

—FERDINAND REYNA

Janine Charrat's Ballets de France gave their first performance on Friday October 3rd at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. Janine Charrat is well-liked in the Paris dance world. They still remember the young prodigy, pupil of Madame Egorova, and the child artist of the film *La Mort du Cygne* and later the creator of so many interesting works such as *Jeu de Cartes*, *Les Algues*, etc.

However, this time, Janine Charrat disappointed even her best friends. The only two ballets which avoided the disaster are those by Janine Charrat herself who it appears has not lost any of her qualities as a choreographer.

Chimère (music by Jacques Thiérac, Decors and costumes by Thamara de Letay). The subject is as follows: we all chase after fancies and often sacrifice all the good things of the world for them. But what do these fancies bring us?: the dizzy heights of the infinite or the anguish of obscurity. *Chimère* is danced by Janine Charrat herself and Alfonso de Andrade in the principal roles. The choreography is coherent and good. It is well-ordered, balanced and brings out well the mystery and strange poetry at the basis of this ballet theme.

In *Liens* danced by Janine Charrat, Adolfo de Andrade and Elburg Karel, we see two people a man and a woman victims of a central character, Destiny, which arranges the threads which will determine the development and issue of their lives. These intertwined threads form the decor of the ballet as conceived by Bernard Daydé. In this ballet, we see the two protagonists linked together by elastic threads around which they coil and free themselves for a moment only to be time and time again tied as the action progresses. This ballet is a real tour de force of complicated choreography more intellectual than poetic. But *Liens* is also a successful work.

Serge Lifar's ballet *Francesca da Rimini* to the overture by Tchaikovsky is an absolute failure. It is a remake of *Roméo et Juliette* presented by Lifar at the Opéra in Paris. Has this choreographer really nothing more to say? One is tempted to think so after seeing this *Francesca*. Balanchine's celebrated pas de trois to music by Minkus was danced by Juan Giuliano Tessa Beaumont and Hélène Trailine. None of the three measured up to the great ones who have danced this famous piece in recent years. Then it was not a very wise thing to do. It is better not to tackle such a testing work when one is only moderately suited.

Le Mandarin Merveilleux, the well-known ballet of Bela Bartok closed the first evening's performance by the Ballets de France. It was well danced by Vera Pasztor, Erno Vashegyi and Paul Maure in the principal roles. The choreography was by Erno Vashegyi and the decors and costumes in expressionist style by Max Röthlisberger. It did not add to the disappointment caused by this evening's programme.

We regret that the rest of the news from Paris has had to be held over until next month.

LONDON

REVIEWS

By Fernau Hall

★ FREDERICK ASHTON'S NEW BALLET *ONDINE*

★ THE POLISH MIME COMPANY

THE production of *Ondine* at Covent Garden, in four scenes and three acts, is inevitably a major event in the history of the Royal Ballet. *Ondine* was one of the best works of Perrot, the genius of the Romantic Ballet, and it was produced by him in London in 1843 at a time when London was the centre of the ballet world; it remained in the repertoire of the Imperial Russian Ballet right up to the twentieth century. (Karsavina danced the title role, and described her memories of the ballet in a delightful radio broadcast.) *Ondine* represents Ashton's first full-length production since *Sylvia* (1952), and is in fact the first full-length ballet for which he is completely responsible, writing the "book" and commissioning the music as well as doing the choreography. Last, but very far from least, *Ondine* gives Margot Fonteyn her longest role, at a time when she is dancing better than ever: whatever else it is or is not, *Ondine* represents a triumph for Margot Fonteyn.

Ashton's *Ondine* shares little more than its title with Perrot's masterpiece. As Ashton explained in an interview in *The Sunday Times* (26th October), he went back to the original story by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (*Undine*), keeping only Perrot's idea of the dance with the shadow (the *pas de l'ombre*). In fact the Ashton ballet is fairly close to another 19th century ballet *Coralie*, also adapted from the de la Motte Fouqué story, and produced by Paul Taglioni in London in 1847 in an obvious attempt to repeat the success of the Perrot *Ondine*. In adapting de la Motte Fouqué's story Perrot showed the most profound insight into the nature of romantic ballet, stressing the mysterious, disturbing elements of the story and making *Ondine* a powerful, frightening and wayward figure, comparable to the heroine of *La Sylphide* and the Act II Giselle. In the same way he made interesting and rounded figures of the other characters: the hero became Matteo, a young fisherman deceived by the wiles of *Ondine* (who wickedly lures away Matteo's bride Giannina and takes Giannina's form to replace her at the wedding). Ashton, in contrast, provided himself with a number of stock figures hardly likely to stimulate him to flights of choreographic invention. The hero is the knight Palemon, a pale figure who belongs to the same family as Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, the Prince in *The Sleeping Beauty* and a score of other noble heroes of classical ballet: he is so lacking in character that he transfers his affections back and forth between Berta and *Ondine* in a way more proper to farce than to tragic ballet. Berta, danced by Julia Farron, is a curious and unconvincing mixture of other roles created or re-interpreted by this fine artist: Lykanion in *Daphnis and Chloe*, Bathilde in *Giselle* and the Countess in *The Sleeping Beauty*. *Ondine* is a different matter,

for this role has unity and Margot Fonteyn has clearly worked on it with the utmost sympathy and imagination, using her hands throughout to suggest the watery nature of the sea-sprite and taking fullest advantage of every opportunity for acting. The first-night audience gave her a splendid ovation which she fully deserved: but I could not help dreaming of what she would have made of Perrot's diabolically attractive creature, a role as exacting and rewarding as Giselle, the Swan Queen and the Firebird.

By far the most successful episode of Ashton's ballet is the second part of Act II—the sea voyage followed by the storm and the shipwreck. Here dancing, mime and scenic spectacle are blended together very ingeniously, and the music fits both the story and the movements. (More about Hans Werner Henze's music later.) As we reach the open sea, swaying movements of the sailors and the backcloth establish the rolling movement of the ship, and *Ondine* and Palemon (Michael Somes) perform a *pas de deux* in which Margot Fonteyn deploys sweetness and lyricism in a manner to which only she has the secret. Her hands ripple like wavelets, her head sways, and her legs flow into long curves which make a perfect harmony with the top half of her body. (Like other supremely great ballerinas she transforms the classical steps with slight adjustment to the line so that they make an effect appropriate to the ballet in question—and quite different from the effect created by the same steps in other ballets.)

A lyrical *pas de deux* of this sort shows Ashton at his best. In building up dramatic conflicts he is much less assured, and this is particularly obvious in his treatment of Berta (who follows *Ondine* and Palemon in order to try to win back Palemon.) It is weak and muddling to bring Berta on to the ship under the eyes of the lovers, and then make her follow them round the deck: she should make a dramatic and unexpected entrance when the ship is at sea, establishing at once a new pattern of triangular conflict.

Act II ends with a highly naturalistic storm scene of the sort very popular in the English theatre in Victorian times and still very much the fashion in Russia at theatres like the Bolshoi and the Kirov. Covent Garden has a long tradition in such matters, and it is interesting to see its machinery used in the old way for spectacular effect. But it is hard to understand why some of the twentieth-century developments in stagecraft are not used to make the storm more fantastic and imaginatively convincing. Projection, for example: in Cologne I have seen no less than four projectors used simultaneously, with excellent results—and the Peking opera showed in its dragon scene a projected storm which was quite magical.

In the *Sunday Times* interview Ashton explained that all the choreography of *Ondine* was inspired by the sea: "I spent hours watching water move and have tried to give the choreography the surge and swell of waves." The results of his studies are clearly apparent in the sea-voyage scene, for which Henze has composed a serene swaying theme for strings, accompanied by widely separated pizzicato beats in the bass. They are also apparent in *Ondine*'s first solo in Act I, accompanied by solo harp: here Margot Fonteyn achieves delightful flickering effects with her feet dropping almost instantaneously from full-pointe to flat foot in a rapid series of steps that suggest the spurting water of the fountain she had just left. But elsewhere in the ballet Ashton's attempts at aqueous lyricism are thwarted by Henze's music, of which the rhythms run counter to Ashton's habitual patterns of choreography. In fact Ashton always choreographs with much the same patterns of rhythm and phrasing, suited to nineteenth-century composers like Tchaikovsky and César Franck, and it was up to Henze to allow for this. Certainly Henze goes a very long way to adapt himself to the requirements of a conventional three-act ballet in the manner of the nineteenth century, abandoning the extremely avant-garde dissonances which he has used in Germany for such ballets as *The Idiot*. Harmonically, he keeps his music (except for one scene) safely in the nineteenth century, using even less dissonance than for example Wagner or Richard Strauss, and allowing himself to follow Stravinsky no further than *The Firebird*. Rhythmically, however, he allows himself far more modernity, using very complex cross-rhythms that show influences from Stravinsky's highly expressionist ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*. To make things worse, Henze's phrasing shows little understanding of the needs of classical dancing; it would do well enough for modern dance (which is normally anguished and jagged) but dancing based on the classical technique must have an ebb and flow in the music corresponding to the shape of the dance-phrases—and this is quite lacking in most of Henze's music.

The split between music and choreography becomes intolerable in the divertissement of Act III. Here Henze, unaccountably, abandons his nineteenth century tonality and flings himself into modern music, somewhat after the manner of Hindemith. The dancers smile bravely as they struggle through the choppy rhythms and phrasing, with anguished harmonies creating a mood of dismay that makes nonsense of the very idea of a divertissement, and I admire them very much—particularly at the awful moments when a dance suddenly ends without any sort of climax or wind-up. It is magnificent, but not ballet.

What is hard to understand is why Ashton entrusted Henze with the grave responsibility of *Ondine*. When he commissioned music for *Homage to the Queen* from Malcolm Arnold, he was able to obtain exactly what he needed for each episode of this ballet—for Arnold has a good understanding of the type of music needed to set dancers in motion, and is quite at home with Ashton's style. It is impossible to conceive of Arnold (or in fact any non-Germanic composer) coming up with anything quite as fantastically out of place as Henze's divertissement music.

Ashton's choice of Lila de Nobili as designer is equally baffling. In the *Sunday Times* interview he said that he chose her (just as he chose Henze) because her idiom is "completely contemporary". In fact most of her settings look as if they had been intended for some opera or pantomime fifty years ago. The two castle settings are stodgy, with drab colours and no element of fantasy, and the ship is naturalistic in a clumsy way. On the other hand the mysterious forest of Act I Scene 2 is really effective: here the designer uses painted gauzes and high rostrums to create a remarkable undersea effect which is in harmony with the theme of the ballet—even if rather odd for a forest on land. Her costume designs are equally variable in quality. Those of the Ondines (with a high Empire line) make the girls of the corps de ballet look ravishing, and Margot Fonteyn's two wispy costumes give her a delightfully rippling seductiveness. On the other hand Julia Farron is crippled by a clumsily gathered-up hunting outfit (with large black boots) that makes it impossible for her to dance with grace or expression. As for the dancers in the divertissement, they are all made to look ridiculous: the skirts of the girls are too wide to suit the bodices, and end with distressing jagged edges, while the men have

breeches which billow out as they turn in a most disconcerting way... Clearly the designer cannot picture what happens to costumes when they are used by ballet dancers.

Michael Northen, lighting director, uses side and top lighting to good effect in making the Ondines stand out boldly in three dimensions, and he makes the scene in the mysterious forest very effective by causing the gauzes to blend with the opaque scenery. But I could have wished him to cast more of a veil of mystery over the other scenes, instead of showing us the flats and backcloths in all their Victorian stodginess.

For such a long ballet, the cast is surprisingly small: apart from Ondine, Palemon, Berta and the corps de ballet, there is only a Hermit (a mime role) and Tirrenio, a sea god. The latter role is danced by Alexander Grant, who is rather miscast as a glamorous figure in cloth-of-gold. There are only a few small opportunities for soloists in the divertissement; Mayon Lane stands out for a few brief moments because her steps are completely in time to the music (I can only imagine that her exceptional musicality inspired Ashton momentarily to come to grips with the inappropriately sombre music with its very fast and complex rhythms.)

The Royal Ballet has now produced two full-length ballets, *The Prince of the Pagodas* and *Ondine*, for which the choreographer was fully responsible for every detail of treatment, and together they cast a good deal of light on the problem of how long a ballet ought to be. It is clear that financially there is a lot to be said for a ballet lasting a complete evening: otherwise such performances would not bulk so large in the programme planning. Artistically, however, the full-length ballet is a dubious proposition.

The Prince of the Pagodas consisted very largely of padding, and would have been much more successful if compressed into one act. Ashton's *Ondine* also contains a good deal of padding: the divertissement for example, could well be cut, and most of the scenes go on too long, forcing Ashton to stretch his ideas rather thin. Perhaps the ideal length would be two acts—the same length as *Giselle* and *La Sylphide*.

Such a length would also help Margot Fonteyn a good deal, for her role is excessively repetitive: for the most part it consists of one pas de deux after another, all in much the same lyrical mood. But at the end of the ballet she has the chance of expressing a different mood—she dances sadly with her beloved, knowing that he will die when he kisses her—and how marvellously she takes advantage of this opportunity! Here is acting combined with dancing, with the dancer using all her musicality and sense of line to make her body fully expressive, and adding poignant facial expressions which change and develop with the organic quality of life itself. The basic movements allotted to her by Ashton are more or less neutral, differing only in tempo from those in other parts of the ballet, and it is her extraordinary powers of interpretation which make them so effective. This pas de deux is the high point of the ballet, and not the *pas de l'ombre*, as one might have expected: the latter in fact has little of the magic of the original, so movingly described by Karsavina in her broadcast talk.

With all its deficiencies, *Ondine* is the best of Ashton's full-length ballets, and if it were not for Henze's music I feel sure that it would establish itself firmly in the repertoire. What is certain is that Margot Fonteyn's performance in the title role is not to be missed.

POLISH MIME COMPANY

The season at Sadler's Wells of the Polish Mime Theatre, directed by Henryk Tomaszewski, showed a company which clearly owed its origin to the visits of Marcel Marceau to Eastern Europe. The fact that this two-year-old company was able to hold an audience, in spite of deficiencies in technique and choreography, shows how lively is the mime tradition revived and developed in France by Dullin, Decroux and Marceau.

The most successful item was the comic sketch *A Book*. Four different characters read the same book, and their varying impressions were brought to life by the same group of three artists. The comic possibilities of this idea were realized in a farcical way, though one missed the devastating surrealist fantasy which distinguished Marceau's best mime-drama *The Pawnshop*; and the Polish version of Gogol's *The Overcoat* was inferior to Marceau's production, even though more authentically Slav in minor details. Tomaszewski's search for a style of his own could be seen very clearly in *The Crib*—based on Polish folk-lore (odd variants of Biblical themes). Certain moments of this were successful enough to suggest a promising field for future work. On the other hand two completely serious items—*Quasimodo* and *The Cabbala*—were rather dull, showing once again that pure mime is not really suited to such themes.

FERNAU HALL

As we go to press: B.B.C. Television announce that Nadia Nerina is to be partnered by Nicolai Fadeychev in their production of *Giselle* on 23rd November, with Lydia Sokolova as Bertha, Margaret Hill as Myrtha, Julia Farron as Princess Bathilde and Alfred Rodrigues as the Prince of Courland. Niels Bjorn Larsen will dance Hilarion. Two years ago 14,000,000 viewers saw Fadeychev partner Ulanova in a television production of *Swan Lake* at the time of the Bolshoi visit to London.

TELEVISION BALLET

—By HELEN ROSS

Sunday 19th October—

B.B.C. Television—Antonio

This presentation, with excellent sets of a café provided a most suitable background to Antonio and his Spanish dancers; Antonio himself was the compere. The highlights of the show were the *Furucca* magnificently danced by Paco Ruiz, a Flamenco number performed with fire and zest by Carmen Rojas, and a superb rendering of a Zapateado by Antonio himself. The company and Rosita Segovia provided other numbers which made this a most enjoyable programme. Choreography was by Antonio, Clifford Hatts was the designer and the programme was produced by Christian Simpson.

Wednesday 22nd October—

B.B.C. Television—Riverside One

The ballet presented in this programme was Walter Gore's *The Night and the Silence*, one of the new ballets composed for this year's International Edinburgh Festival. As the London season of the company which performed in Edinburgh was cancelled it was most enterprising of B.B.C. Television to give their viewers the opportunity of seeing at least one of these new ballets. Taking part were Paula Hinton and David Poole, both fine dramatic dancers, and I have nothing but the highest praise for their performances. The ballet was interesting up until about halfway through, then it became so repetitious that I found myself impatient for the end. I also felt that the dramatic force and emotion was wasted on such a weak theme. Bach's serene and beautiful music did not strike me as suitable choice for this type of ballet.



ONDINE

Principal Roles

ONDINE MARGOT FONTEYN

PALEMON MICHAEL SOMES

BERTA JULIA FARRON

TIRRENIO

Lord of the Mediterranean Sea

.. .. ALEXANDER GRANT

A HERMIT LESLIE EDWARDS

"This is the story of Palemon and Ondine telling how Palemon wedded with a water-sprite and what chanced therefrom and how Palemon died and how Ondine returned to her element beneath the Mediterranean Sea."

ACT I

Scene I—Outside Berta's Castle

Berta returning from a hunt, is being courted by Palemon, who offers her an amulet, which she scorns. She rejoins her friends. Palemon is left alone in meditation. A strange being—Ondine—appears mysteriously and Palemon is immediately captivated. She is alarmed and disappears into the forest, where Palemon—already in the clutches of his destiny—follows her.

Berta sees Palemon disappear with Ondine; cries alarm and orders their pursuit.

Scene II—A Mysterious Forest

Tirrenio and the sprites lie in wait for the lovers. He endeavours to separate them and warns that should Palemon be unfaithful he must forfeit his life. Ondine, defying Tirrenio, together with Palemon seeks out a hermit who marries them. She gains her soul.

The act ends with Berta distraught at the acts of Tirrenio who tries to impede her pursuit of the lovers.

ACT II

A Port

Palemon and Ondine, after their marriage, come to a Port where, seeing a ship, they decide to embark. Berta, following, sees the lovers, and bribes the captain to take her unseen on board. She, not knowing of their marriage, is moved by jealousy when Palemon, in a transport of love, offers the amulet to Ondine. She reproaches Palemon and

reminds him that he had previously offered it to her.

Ondine immediately gives the jewel to Berta. The enraged Tirrenio rises from the sea and snatches the amulet from Berta. Ondine runs to the side of the boat and dipping her hands into the water produces an exquisite magical necklace which she presents to Berta, who, horrified by the supernatural gift, throws it at Ondine's feet. The sailors regard Ondine with awe and doubt and threaten her. Tirrenio, rising from the sea to protect Ondine, beckons to her. He creates a storm and, rising on the crest of a wave, seizes her and drags her to the bottom of the sea. The storm increases.

ACT III

Palemon's Castle

Palemon and Berta, who have been saved from the shipwreck, arrive from their wedding ceremony. Berta shows her present to him, a magnificent portrait and then leaves to prepare for the guests. Palemon, in a reverie, has a vision of Ondine under the water. Berta returns and disturbs his dream. The guests arrive and the festivities begin; at their height strange and sinister happenings occur.

Tirrenio appears seeking vengeance—the festivities are disrupted—Berta is dragged out by the Ondines and Ondine reluctantly appears.

Palemon now realizes that Ondine is his only love. She warns him that, owing to his lack of faith, her kiss can only mean his death. Finally, sadly, she kisses him and he falls dead. She takes his body back to her own element there to hold him in an eternal embrace.

First performed by

THE ROYAL BALLET

at the Royal Opera House, London

27th October, 1958

A BALLET IN THREE ACTS

with choreography by

FREDERICK ASHTON

and music by

HANS WERNER HENZE

scenery and costumes by

LILA DE NOBILI

Scenario freely adapted by Frederick Ashton from the story *Undine* by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué.



Photos:

Opposite page

Tirrenio endeavours to separate Ondine and Palemon.

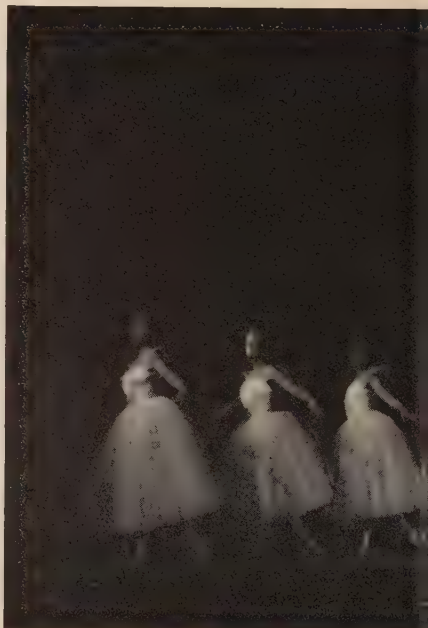
This page:

Ondine and Palemon, defying Tirrenio, seek out a Hermit who marries them.

After their marriage Ondine and Palemon embark on a ship, but unknown to them Berta has bribed the captain to take her unseen on board. The sailors are afraid of Ondine and threaten her because they fear her power over the waters.

Photo: Houston Rogers







Photographing the Ballet

*The first in a series of selections from the works
of famous photographers*

JAMES D. O'CALLAGHAN

OF DUBLIN

portrays

FESTIVAL BALLET

in

*Six Studies
of*
LES SYLPHIDES

*John Gilpin and
Belinda Wright
in NUTCRACKER*



THE ROYAL BALLET

JANUARY

Although at the beginning of 1958 the first Company were still abroad on the last lap of their long American and Canadian tour, in London the second Company were giving their first season at the Royal Opera House, which included the presentation of three new ballets—*The Blue Rose* with choreography by Peter Wright, *The Angels* by John Cranko, and Kenneth Macmillan's *The Burrow*. Andrée Howard's *Veneziana* was also revived.

FEBRUARY

This month saw the return of the major Company and their season opened at the Royal Opera House on the 19th with Robert Helpmann joining them to dance in five ballets.

Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield were married on the 4th of the month.

MARCH

This season continued right through March. On the 27th Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and H.R.H. Princess Margaret were present at the 10th Gala Performance given in aid of The Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund and the Royal Ballet Fund for Students.

APRIL

This long season was still in progress and continued through to the end of May with very few breaks in between.

MAY

On the 26th the Company opened at the Brussels Exhibition, remaining there until 1st June, with a performance on six of the seven days.

JUNE

The Company returned from Belgium and opened at the Royal Opera House on the 3rd of the month. It was during this season that another Royal occasion took place, a grand gala performance in the presence of H.M. Queen Elizabeth and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, to celebrate the centenary of the present Royal Opera House, destroyed by fire in 1856, rebuilt in 1858. This was a splendid occasion with the Covent Garden Opera Company and the Royal Ballet Company taking part.

The Queen talking with Dame Margot Fonteyn when artists were presented to Her Majesty on the stage at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, after the gala performance of opera and ballet on the night of June 10th to celebrate the centenary of the present Royal Opera House. With the Queen is the Duke of Edinburgh, who on this day was also celebrating his own 37th birthday.

JULY

The season of the major Ballet Company ended on the 21st June and they were then succeeded by the second Company for a short season at the Royal Opera House from the 25th June to 3rd July.

AUGUST

There followed a few weeks break for No. 1 Company until they resumed at Covent Garden for a four weeks' season commencing 18th August. On the 20th Kenneth Macmillan's new ballet *Agon* was premièred with newly-created ballerina Anya Linden, partnered by David Blair, in the leading role.

SEPTEMBER

During this season Yvette Chauviré the great French prima ballerina made ten guest artist appearances at the Royal Opera House, partnered by Alexis Rassine, and in early September Chauviré danced the role of Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty* for the first time.

This season ended on the 17th September, and during the four weeks there was a ballet performance six evenings a week with a matinée every Saturday.

Meanwhile No. 2 Company, headed by Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield, had departed for Australia on an eight months' tour of Australia and New Zealand commencing 11th September. Svetlana Beriosova and Bryan Ashbridge left by air during the month to dance with the Company in Sydney.

The remainder of Royal Ballet No. 1 then made a four week tour of Manchester, Bristol and Oxford commencing September 15th.

On the 10th September Anya Linden married Igor Tamarin, 28-year-old American actor and musician.

... THE YEAR ...

OCTOBER

When the Company returned from the provinces they opened their season at the Royal Opera House on the 27th October, Frederick Ashton's new 3-act ballet *Ondine* with Margot Fonteyn in the title role received its world première on the 30th in the presence of a very distinguished audience.

NOVEMBER

The season continued at the Royal Opera House throughout the month. Anya Linden and David Blair left by air to dance in Melbourne with the second Company from 10th November to 13th December.

DECEMBER

The season continues at the Royal Opera House. Robert Helpmann will join the 2nd Company in Australia on the 15th of this month.

Lack of space prevents us from publishing a list of individual engagements of many of the principals of the Royal Ballet. These have been numerous and varied, covering TV, concerts, talks, opening exhibitions, and a number of visits to dance abroad.

Despite the fact that the major Company have not undertaken a long and exhausting foreign tour during 1958, a glance at their engagements as listed will show that the dancers have, as always, worked extremely hard throughout the year.

Perhaps I may be forgiven if I digress a little from this factual record of the year to say how fortunate we have been to have Margot Fonteyn dancing in London throughout 1958. I once heard a young girl say that she would sacrifice all her pocket money to see as much of Fonteyn as possible throughout the year "while I can". That is what we all feel about Fonteyn—we ask ourselves *can* she ever surpass such-and-such a performance, shall we ever see the like of *this* again?

Having seen her recent creation of the title role in *Ondine* we are still asking the same question at the end of 1958.

FESTIVAL BALLET

BY the beginning of January it was already obvious that no seats would be available for the rest of the Festival Ballet season at London's Festival Hall. Their full production of *The Nutcracker* created record business when it opened in December, and every day the box office was besieged by people hoping they would be able to obtain returned tickets.

When they closed on the 11th January the Company immediately left London on a tour of the English provinces and Ireland which lasted until the end of April, and by that time preparations were already made to commence one of their longest-ever foreign tours.

After a brilliant opening at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre when all "first-night" Paris and many famous personalities attended to see the première of *Witch Boy*, the Company proceeded to Nice, Lisbon, Marseille, Israel, Zurich, Munich and finally the Nervi Festival before opening for another record season at Festival Hall London commencing 16th July.

Alicia Markova (who had also been with them in Paris and on many other occasions during their European tour) danced with the Company in London as guest prima ballerina to be followed later in the season by Beryl Grey, fresh from her great personal triumph with the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow, Leningrad Kiev and Tiflis.

Witch Boy was given its London première, followed by two new ballets, one which was simply called "the *New Ballet*" for want of a more descriptive title, but known to the dancers as "Cha-Cha-Cha" because John Gilpin danced this (amongst other things) in it, and *Romeo and Juliet* which proved such a good vehicle for Oleg Briansky, who had joined the Company and was partnering Krassovska in this role as well as Beryl Grey in her repertoire which included the *Don Quixote* pas de deux.

In August Dr. Braunschweig invited Leon Woizikowski to produce *Petrushka* during the Company's summer season at Festival Hall, and the opportunity to take classes with the great Polish maître de ballet was an inspiration to all the dancers.

As we go to press Festival Ballet are completing another tour of the English provinces which commenced soon after the London season ended in September, and they will then return to London's Festival Hall for their Christmas season. This will again be *The Nutcracker* and it is not difficult to prophecy that it will be a sell-out, a fitting



Beryl Grey takes a bow at the Bolshoi

costumes were by Deryk Mendel, winner of the International Choreographic Competition at Aix-les-Bains in 1957. Two all-Tudor evenings were also given and on the 15th the Company's own dancer Norman Morrice presented his first ballet *Two Brothers*. This ballet received extremely good press notices and was further proof, if proof be needed, that Marie Rambert still retains her ability to find new talent and cultivate it. By the end of their season another new star had emerged—Lucette Aldous—whose success is recorded elsewhere in this issue.

Immediately following the London season the Company commenced another tour of the provinces, Ireland and Wales.

IN BRIEF

climax to what must have been Festival Ballet's most successful year to date.

This kind of success however does not come of its own accord, it has to be planned and worked for. To this young Company team work amongst themselves is not sufficient, they have enrolled the public in the team also, and when you sit on this side of the footlights you feel you are a participant in whatever is going on on the other side.

The Company is fortunate in having John Gilpin as their male star. His brilliant reputation has reached new heights this year by his portrayal of the dramatic title role in *The Witch Boy*.

They are also fortunate in their direction. Forty years ago, in July 1918, Dr. Julian Braunschweig the Company's Director General commenced his career as an impresario, and it has been his counsel and guiding hand which has steered the Company through the inevitable early years of struggle to its present-day popularity, sure of a welcome no matter which part of the world they appear in.

To complete this triumvirate they also have Anton Dolin. I hope the day is not far distant when the contribution Mr. Dolin has made to British ballet at home, and British prestige abroad, as a dancer, choreographer and Artistic Director of London's Festival Ballet will be remembered in the right quarters when the New Year's Honours List is compiled.

BALLET RAMBERT

IN early January this Company commenced a tour of the English provinces and Scotland which lasted through several months.

Following their highly successful tour of China last year, Marie Rambert had planned to follow this up with a visit to the Lebanon during the summer in which the Company were to have been one of the major attractions of the famous Baalbeck International Festival. Unfortunately, owing to the political unrest in the country at the time, this project had to be abandoned.

On the 8th September their London season commenced at Sadler's Wells Theatre with the première of *Epithalame*. Choreography and



ALICIA MARKOVA

JANUARY, 1958 was a momentous month for Alicia Markova. While still dancing at the Metropolitan Opera House New York in early January the news came through almost simultaneously that she had been named as the Woman of the Year for her achievements in the field of Art by an American Women's Organisation; to celebrate her 20th season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, the New York Public Library had put on an Exhibition "Markova at the Met", and a little later in the month Londoners were delighted to see her name in the New Year's Honours List as the recipient of the C.B.E.

On Markova's return to London rehearsals began immediately for her appearances as Guest ballerina with the Italian State Opera Company in *William Tell* and *The Pearl Fishers* at Drury Lane, with Boris Ralov as her partner.

There followed many engagements on television, the programme *Sunday Night at the Palladium*, and finally on tour with the Festival Ballet as guest ballerina, dancing at their première in Paris and on other occasions during their European tour. When Festival Ballet returned to London for their summer season Alicia Markova, again joined them for a time, then out to New York for another season at the Metropolitan Opera House.

When the principal dancers of the three major British Companies combined to give their services at the Gala Matinée on the 13th November in the presence of H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and H.R.H. The Princess Margaret, in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing, Alicia Markova flew from New York to take part in the performance.

THE YEAR IN BRIEF . . . VISITING COMPANIES

(Continued)

★ UKRAINIAN STATE COSSACK CO.

★ FRANCOIS SAGAN BALLET
Le Rendez-vous Manqué

★ BALLETS 1958
DES ETOILES DE PARIS

★ FELIKS PARNELL'S
BALLET FROM POLAND

★ CLASSICAL THEATRE
FROM CHINA

★ INTERNATIONAL BALLET
OF THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

★ ANTONIO
AND HIS SPANISH BALLET



*Toni Lander and Vladimir Skouratoff in a scene from
Le Rendez-vous Manqué*



The Ukrainian State Cossacks at the Albert Hall, London

Right: *Milko Sparemblek, Vassili Sulich and Ivan Dragadze in
Cache-Cache, Ballets 1958 Des Etoiles de Paris*
Photo: *Lido*



New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

DON JUAN

Many ballet goers are familiar with Ashton's ballet to Richard Strauss' music and will remember with some sadness Moira Shearer's Young Wife. It was used again only last year for John Taras' ballet, *Eternal Amour*, for Les Ballets de Paques. The HMV disc, ALP1591, has variety as it also includes the love scene from *Feuersnot*—an early work of this composer—and Smetana's *Vlatava* and *From Bohemia's Meadows* from *Ma Vlast*. Cluytens' rendering of all these pieces is not great but, nevertheless, is sound and satisfying should you want these items.

LES SYLPHIDES

The first record of *Les Sylphides*, coupled with music from *Graduation Ball*, is RCA RD27077 with Fiedler conducting the Boston Pops. Nothing more need be said than he will please his numerous fans as the recordings are good. Peter Maag with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, Decca LXT5422, really has some feeling for the score, though I think his interpretation is perhaps a little too robust generally—slightly over zealous brass here and there. It is worth serious consideration, particularly if you want excerpts of Delibes' music from *La Source*. He and Minkus wrote the score between them and his sections were so successful that he never looked back.

THE GREAT DETECTIVE

Arnell's music for Margaret Dale's short-lived ballet, is at any rate easy on the ear, even though it may have no other attributes. Pye have recorded the suite in their well produced series "The Composer Conducts," CEM36011, which will fulfil the want of those who enjoyed the ballet Sherlock Holmes.

GISELLE

There are many things for which we have to thank the Bolshoi Ballet when it came to Covent Garden two years ago, and H.M.V.'s issue, CLP 1210-1, of Yuri Fayer's conducting of the virtually complete score, is one. It is as important as Mercury's complete *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake* and *Nutcracker* and Decca's complete *Coppelia* and I hope it will encourage more and more full recordings of ballets. One may dispute Fayer's tempo at times, but remembering the Bolshoi production, some of these occasions are amply justified. I am quite sure that this most valuable addition to the repertoire, will be a great loss to any ballet lover who fails to buy it.

LA GLOIRE

I include these two records, Columbia 33CX1574-5 of the *Egmont* incidental music and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, not only because the overture was part of Tudor's ballet, *La Gloire*, but because every side is something that is to be treasured for a lifetime. I have found that there are some ballet-goers who are timid of the musical side of this composite art form and feel that Beethoven's last and greatest symphony is beyond them. My sincere advice to them is to get this recording, so superbly conducted by Klemperer, listen to it several times and it will become one of their greatest joys.

SWAN LAKE

Your choice of the three discs of excerpts on both sides from *Swan Lake* will, to some extent, be influenced by the items. Fistoulari gives a sound performance, Decca LXT5409, but when compared with Jean Morel, RCA. RB16070, one realizes that his tempi are inclined to drag and it needs more life. Morel keeps the music going and you feel his vitality, while the recording is very good indeed. But it is Kurtz' disc, HMV. ALP1644, with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist, that wins all the way round. His shaping and subtlety of phrasing, the Philharmonia Orchestra's really fine playing shown up by an excellent recording, and his unusual choice of items makes it a honey! The rarely heard *Danse Russe* and short coda to the second Act pas de deux as well as the normally omitted variation from the pas de trois are included.

As a possible help to you in the search for Christmas presents, I must briefly add the following, as I can thoroughly recommend them: 33CX1554 Beethoven's *First* and *Eighth Symphonies* (Philharmonia-Klemperer), the former used by Charrat for her ballet, *Symphony*; CLP1182 Ireland's *Piano Concerto* and Stravinsky's *Capriccio* (Horsley—R.P.O.—Cameron), the latter used for Alan Carter's ballet of the same name; P8367 "Vistas d'Espana" works of Albeniz and Turina used by visiting Spanish companies and beautifully played by the excellent guitarist, L. Almeida; and finally, COLH36 Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and *Piano Concerto K466* (Bruno Walter—V.P.O.) the former used by Gsovsky, Armour and Asmus.

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CINDERELLA *Prokofiev*

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Suite No. 2, Op. 108

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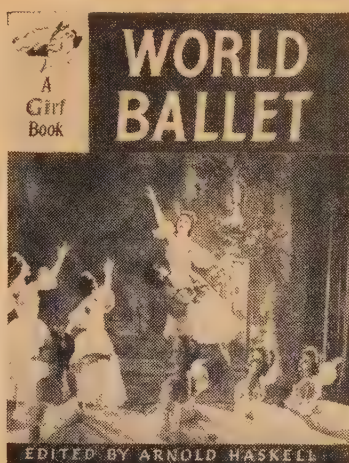


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NEW BOOKS

Red Curtain Up. By Beryl Grey. (Secker & Warburg, 30s.)

I found this book enthralling and not easily laid down. The visit of the Bolshoi Ballet to this country did nothing to diminish a legend, and quickened our desire to see and know more of the theatre and method that produced this fabulous company. Now we may achieve this, but in the company of a dancer, herself a great artist. That is the special charm of this book, for Miss Grey, who writes as engagingly as she speaks, with an eye for the look and a heart for the feel of things, enables us to share with her the tremendous experience of being the first Western ballerina to dance on the historic Bolshoi stage.

Her visit had the beginning that every stage artist dreads—illness and, consequently, the first performance cancelled at the last moment. Miss Grey describes shortly and without self pity her fight against increasing sickness and her subsequent collapse at rehearsal, but it needs little imagination to realise how gruelling was the experience, both mentally and physically, for a stranger in a strange land and with the attention of the whole ballet world focused expectantly on her. "Moscow sickness" is a malady to which most strangers succumb sooner or later, and the weakness it engenders is apt to linger. Here I would like to pay tribute to the sheer grit with which she, fully conscious of her responsibility as representative of English ballet, faced up to it all. Her indomitable spirit made the tour a triumphant progress, and dancers and audiences alike took her to their hearts. Magnificently partnered by Kondratov, she found herself responding to the deeply dedicated, sympathetic and untrammelled atmosphere of the Russian ballet scene, and dancing with a sense of ease and freedom that is, as all artists know, the happiest and most rewarding of sensations. The many action photographs, taken with a feeling for the essential moment by her husband, Dr. Svenson, well illustrate this.

During her stay of thirty-two days, Beryl Grey danced in *Giselle* and *Lac* with four different companies—keeping her solos without alteration but with small changes to *pas de deux*—and travelled from Moscow to Kiev, Tiflis, and Leningrad and then back to Moscow. Working so closely with the Soviet dancers in class, rehearsal and performance, her highly professional account of her impressions and all she saw and experienced of their training and production, is of absorbing interest. But in the end, the strongest memory she brings back with her is of the tremendous friendliness and consideration shown her on every side. As one gives, so does one receive.

At Leningrad, the ballet mistress introduced herself by saying: "I can't speak English but we have a common language." Our first ambassador to the Court of Terpsichore in Russia has added nothing but lustre to the beautiful language of classical ballet.

Ballet Annual, 13 Ed. Arnold L. Haskell. (A. & C. Black, 25s.)

Now that the rigours of the English summer are well over, one's thoughts turn more gratefully than usual to the pleasures of winter, and one of these is the latest edition of *Ballet Annual*. The attractive appearance and varied contents make it a rewarding book for thoughtful reading or to fill idle moments.

It contains the usual record of outstanding events of the year in Britain; news of overseas and foreign companies—with an angle on the fortunes of the many English maitres de ballet now established abroad, including "odious comparisons" of ballet in England and Germany. Various authorities contribute articles that range from the history of *Undine*—very apposite in view of the latest ballet at Covent Garden—to a symposium on the subject matter of ballet. In this very stimulating contribution some well-known personalities, choreographers, and critics reply to leading questions. I was much impressed by the clarity and simplicity with which Frederick Ashton always got so beautifully to the heart of the matter, and the great depth of Marie Rambert's understanding of the young choreographer.

The end papers that were always a feature of this book are missing. I presume they have lost in the battle against the ever-increasing expense of production that is gradually removing even the most customary embellishments and refinements that gave individuality and interest to a book. The latest and most deplorable example is the practice of lumping all the plates together. This saves binding costs, though it detracts from the illustrations, and used to be found only in the cheaper paper-backs. Now it has reached the higher ranges, and a book reviewed last month was the latest victim. Happily, all *Ballet Annual's* many excellent photographs are well disposed throughout its pages.

The Swan: The Story of Anna Pavlova. By Helen May. (Nelson 10s. 6d.)

Four times a week eight little girls made the journey up the hill from the station at Golders Green to the ballroom at Ivy House. They were the fortunate few selected as pupils by Anna Pavlova from many applicants during one of her seasons before the 1914 war. One of

them now tells the story of the famous ballerina, but her life and career is only given in briefest outline for this is really a picture of those halcyon days at Ivy House where class, personally taken by Pavlova, was followed by Russian tea with cakes and cream, and the children would wander in the garden at will. Pavlova had a great understanding of young people, and her little pupils adored her for herself alone, and not only as their dancing divinity. After the break caused by the war, the visits were continued until it all ended so tragically under the auctioneer's hammer.

I found the simple, unpretentious, but charming account curiously telling and, as with all the descriptions given by "her girls", it captures something of the personality and art of Pavlova that more learned essays often miss.

PIGEON CROWLE

Ballet No. 8. Serge Lido (text Irène Lidová). (A. & C. Black, 45s.)

As every year, the signing of the new album by Serge Lido Ballet No. 8 took place at the pleasant bookshop La librairie de la Danse run by Madame Gilberte Cournand in the Place Dauphine on October 6th. The album is still better presented and even more interesting than those of previous years. The pages devoted to the stage-designers, the Bolshoi ballet, British and American artists and to Antonio are by far the most attractive. The two pages devoted to the Soviet corps de ballet in *Swan Lake* are remarkable, a perfect white on a velvety black background. Unfortunately the head of Ludmilla Tcherina appears in colour on the cover in the Antinea costume from the ballet *L'Atlantide*. Lido could not have foreseen that at the last moment a difference of opinion would have arisen between the dancer and the management of the Theatre National de L'Opera.*

FERDINAND REYNA

* See Reyna's report in our November issue.—EDITOR.

The Nutcracker Ballet. By Pigeon Crowle and Mike Davis. (Faber and Faber, 21s.)

Mike Davis at the Royal Ballet. (Oldbourne, 25s.)

These two books have a lot in common. Both have a large number of photographs by Mike Davis; the first has a text mainly written by Pigeon Crowle, while the other has a number of short contributions, one written by Pigeon Crowle.

As a picture book *Mike Davis at the Royal Ballet* is the better of the two. The layout, design and blockmaking are excellent: the photographs are reproduced as large as possible by some photolitho process which gives rich blacks and a fine range of grey tones, and the whole book is in the same matt paper, so that photographs can be (and are) interspersed with text. *The Nutcracker Ballet*, in contrast, has half-tone blocks on glossy paper, sections of which are folded in which the text pages, and the images are surrounded by areas of white: an old-fashioned type of book production which fails to suggest the glamour of ballet (as is clearly the author's intention). Discounting the differences in methods of reproduction, one can see much the same contrast in Mike Davis' photographs: those in the "Royal Ballet" book have obviously been selected by Mike Davis as being the most striking images among thousands he has caught on celluloid over a period of many years, while those of the *Nutcracker* belong entirely to one production of one ballet, and inevitably only a proportion of them have the somnambulistic clarity which is typical of the best of Mike Davis' work. Movement in ballet is so fast that the photographer must feel a good image coming and click the shutter just before it arrives, allowing exactly the right fraction of a second for his own reaction-time. How Mike Davis can do this and get his focus dead-sharp is a mystery to me.

The text of *The Nutcracker* is more stimulating for Pigeon Crowle gives an account both of the first production (in 1892) and of Lichine's production for the Festival Ballet (Christmas, 1957). The book is

(Continued overleaf)



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NEW BOOKS—Continued

intended for children and young people, and—as is usual in a book of this kind—there is no attempt at criticism of the productions of the ballet as works of art. (To my mind this is a pity). On the other hand Pigeon Crowle does very well in showing ballet as a synthesis of story, music, choreography, costume and scenic design, performance, and stage management, and the illustrations include many of the designs of Alexandre Benois. *Mike Davis at the Royal Ballet*, in contrast, treats ballet almost as if it consisted entirely of dancing.

Teach Your Child Ballet. By Gerald Severn. (Heinemann, 6s.)

Boris Kniasseff is a great Russian teacher, and his new system of giving the barre work on the floor, instead of having the pupils put one hand on the barre in the normal way, is of the highest interest. When I first heard of it I was extremely dubious. I had great respect for Kniasseff's work as a teacher, admiring him for maintaining the great Russian school in all its glory; and I knew that every detail of this school, with its progression through barre exercises to the various sections of centre work, had been perfected by generations of great *maitres de ballets*—Italian, French and Russian. It seemed to me that a major break with the past, such as putting the barre on the floor, was a great mistake.

When I watched Kniasseff's class in Geneva, however, I quickly changed my mind. The proof of the pudding is in the eating: once they reach the centre, Kniasseff's pupils do much the same work as those in other Russian classes, and their balance, control, suppleness and line are first-rate. Certainly they seem to have the most remarkable freshness and energy; and, as Kniasseff explained to me, one of the great features of his "barre" on the floor is that it saves a great deal of energy, helping the students to concentrate on just those muscles which are needed for the particular exercise in question.

Another great advantage of the Kniasseff "barre" is that the pupil never does anything with the wrong line, and so does not have to unlearn anything: this speeds up progress enormously. It is easy to obtain good line when one can concentrate all energy on this—and in many cases a student companion *holds* the limbs in the right position. Take, for example, a leap with one leg tucked up under the body. It is very difficult for the pupil to achieve the correct turned-out line in this movement, for so much energy and attention goes into getting into the air that the dancer has little left for fine details of line. But when he has practised this position on the ground, he learns the feel of it—i.e. his muscular memory is trained—and he has little difficulty in achieving it in the air.

The fact is that the position of the dancer lying on the ground is no more artificial than the position of the dancer standing at the barre: both differ a great deal in the distribution of muscular tension from the position of the dancer performing in the centre (or on the stage, which amounts to the same thing). Kniasseff has worked out his ground exercises very carefully as a preparation for all the normal classical movements which follow in the centre, and his achievements demand serious attention by all ballet teachers.

Gerald Severn's book is important because, for the first time in English, it gives details (with photographic illustrations) of 30 of Kniasseff's exercises on the floor. Unfortunately it gives none of the theoretical background of these exercises, nor does it link them with the centre work for which they are a preparation. Incredibly enough, it presents this great contribution to professional ballet training as "how to teach yourself ballet, or how every mother can scientifically develop her child's muscles at home, from the age of four onward". Ballet demands the professional teacher quite as much as surgery, and is as little suited to "do it yourself" propagation. I hope that teachers and professional dancers will read the description of the exercises without being put off by the book's title: if their interest is aroused, they should go to Geneva to study with Kniasseff himself.

Your Book of Ballet. By Pigeon Crowle. (Faber and Faber, 9s. 6d.)

This is one of a series of books which explain the basic facts about a number of arts and crafts—ranging from "Acting," "Animal Drawing," "Architecture" and "Astronomy" through the alphabet to "Weaving". Pigeon Crowle's book is well planned, and should make an excellent present for a child of eight to twelve. It has short chapters on history, famous ballets, the kinds of dancer, training, choosing a school, costume, a beginners' class, dancers' prospects, and going to the ballet; also a short glossary.

The distinction between "The Romantic Period" (with an account of *Giselle*) and "The Classical Ballet" (with an account of *Swan Lake*) is rather confusing—for *Swan Lake* is perhaps the most romantic of all ballets, and *Giselle* is always thought of as a classical ballet. Here I think the author should have made clear the meaning of the words "romantic" and "classical" as used in ballet. I also think that her division of dancers into four traditional types is inadequate, in view in the fact that all dancers of today spend a good part of their time in modern ballets to which this division does not apply. In general however, she has selected her material well and adapted her language to the needs of her readers.

FERNAU HALL

PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

FESTIVAL BALLET ON TOUR

W/c 24th Nov. *Palace Theatre, Manchester*
 „ 1st Dec. *Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham*

FESTIVAL BALLET AT FESTIVAL HALL

The Nutcracker in its entirety 22nd December—10th January

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

28th Nov. Fri. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 29th „ Sat. (mat) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 3rd Dec. Wed. (eve) *Mam'zelle Angot, Rinaldo and Armida, The Firebird*
 4th Dec. Thurs. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 6th „ Sat. (mat) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 6th „ Sat. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 9th „ Tues. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 11th „ Thurs. (eve) *Les Patineurs, La Fête Etrange, Mam'zelle Angot*
 13th „ Sat. (mat) *Mam'zelle Angot, La Fête Etrange, Firebird*
 13th „ Sat. (eve) *Mam'zelle Angot, La Fête Etrange, Firebird*
 15th „ Mon. (eve) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 17th „ Wed. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 20th „ Sat. (mat) *Le Lac Des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 23rd „ Tues. (eve) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 26th „ Fri. (mat) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
 27th „ Sat. (mat) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 27th „ Sat. (eve) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
 29th „ Mon. (eve) *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 31st „ Wed. (eve) *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes)
 1st Jan. Thurs. (eve) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
 3rd „ Sat. (mat) *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
 7th „ Wed. (eve) *Cinderella* (Linden, Blair)
 8th „ Thurs. (eve) *Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)
 10th „ Sat. (mat) *Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, Blair)
 10th „ Sat. (eve) *Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
 15th „ Thurs. (eve) *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)
 17th „ Sat. (mat) *Cinderella* (Beriosova, Somes)
 17th „ Sat. (eve) *Cinderella* (Nerina, Blair)

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c 24th Nov. *Streatham Hill Theatre*
 „ 8th Dec. *Theatre Royal, Nottingham*
 „ 5th Jan. *Rex Theatre, Wilmslow*
 „ 12th Jan. *Theatre Royal, York*
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*Introduced this young dancer
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on the eve of her first appearance
as a star with a famous Company*

He now writes a profile of this young Australian, and of the success she met with in her Company's London Season.

THE *Times* is not much given to overpraise so that when a critic on this newspaper so far lets himself go as to use the word "star," the man or woman in question is usually exceptionally good. On September 9th all the national dailies let their hair down and spread out their column inches for Lucette Aldous—Marie Rambert's latest "discovery," and star of this year's Rambert season at Sadler's Wells; the letters were still pouring into Television House from the 11 million viewing audience of Associated Rediffusion's "THIS WEEK" (September 4th) programme, on which she had danced three excerpts from Act II of *Coppelia*.

Lucette was born in Auckland, on September 26th, 1938; at four months she left New Zealand for Australia, where her father became manager of Photofinish in Sydney and Melbourne. She spent her early years travelling all over the country with her parents, going to school in three States until she passed into the Francis Scully School for her first polishing. She had already trained at schools in Brisbane and Newcastle (New South Wales), and her progress was rapid and assured; in 1955 she won the Scully scholarship—a study grant and travelling scholarship—and came to England to Sadler's Wells. Her technique was already remarkably advanced for a girl of 17, and fourteen months at the Wells school put the finishing touches to her talent, part-inherited (her mother was a dancer) and part already developed in Australia.

In April 1957 she joined the Ballet Rambert—or rather she was found by the Queen Mother of Ballet in Britain and taken off post haste to the Mercury Theatre. T. S. Eliot made his debut as a dramatist at the Mercury—the first performance of "Murder in the Cathedral" was staged there—and she had many incomparable predecessors who have danced or choreographed in the Company: Markova, Frederick Ashton—and many others in the three major Companies.

Lucette—whose success has not gone to her head—freely acknowledges her debt to Marie Rambert. She learnt at the Mercury not only all that a devoted teacher could perfect in her, but the refinement of poise and appearance which go to make up what we call "presence." What is a "noble presence" but a half of natural grace and form and a half of straightening and polishing? Her tour of China with the Ballet Rambert, and the acclaim with which they were received wherever they went, convinced Lucette (if she needed convincing) that a career with the Company was not an optional way to pay a debt, but a thing to be desired. "Mim" 's fortunes have fluctuated more than any other because of a lack of the sort of capital float and business enterprise (not to say flair for public relations) which have taken the Royal Ballet to Covent Garden and Festival Ballet to Festival Hall and "popularity." The repertoire of the Rambert Company is at least as impressive as Ninette de Valois's—more impressive in the number of contemporary ballets—the most impressive in its stockpile of Antony Tudor's choreography.



Photo: Roy Round

Lucette, to her credit, believes in the present and future of the Company; if she continues to attract attention as she has done in recent months, she can repay some of the debt she owes to the Mercury, but in any case she does not think she is ready to go back to Australia—though the time has passed when an Australian artist has first to make a career in Europe or America. When her technique and her repertoire are exceptional the stimulus to return might well come from the best sort of "patriotism," a desire to help an emergent cultural pattern to crystallise. Too many dancers go back too soon to be able to give anything to their own country of birth, and spend their days in the warm glow of non-existent fame-from-abroad.

Lucette's best role is as Swanilda in *Coppelia*; naturally small and doll-like offstage, she brings off an interpretation of the role I have seldom seen excelled. She does not belong to the tradition of a lyrical Ulanova or Fonteyn, but rather to the Struchkova-Maria Gorotskaya trend to a dramatic ballet, ushered in by the Bolshoi's Shakespeare choreography; at this stage I doubt whether she is alive enough yet to be able to dance a satisfactory *Giselle*. Her title role in *Lai derette* is a masterpiece of sheer acting, without any of the grimaces or useless gestures which usually afflict prime donne and ballerinas when called upon to act a part as well as move from position to position; in a sugar-plum interlude she seems unhappy.

Devotion, discipline, and a natural talent, will take Lucette anywhere she cares to dance. I hope she will find time to live a few hours away from the "endless river of white flowers," and gain an extra insight into how her audiences exist outside the theatre.

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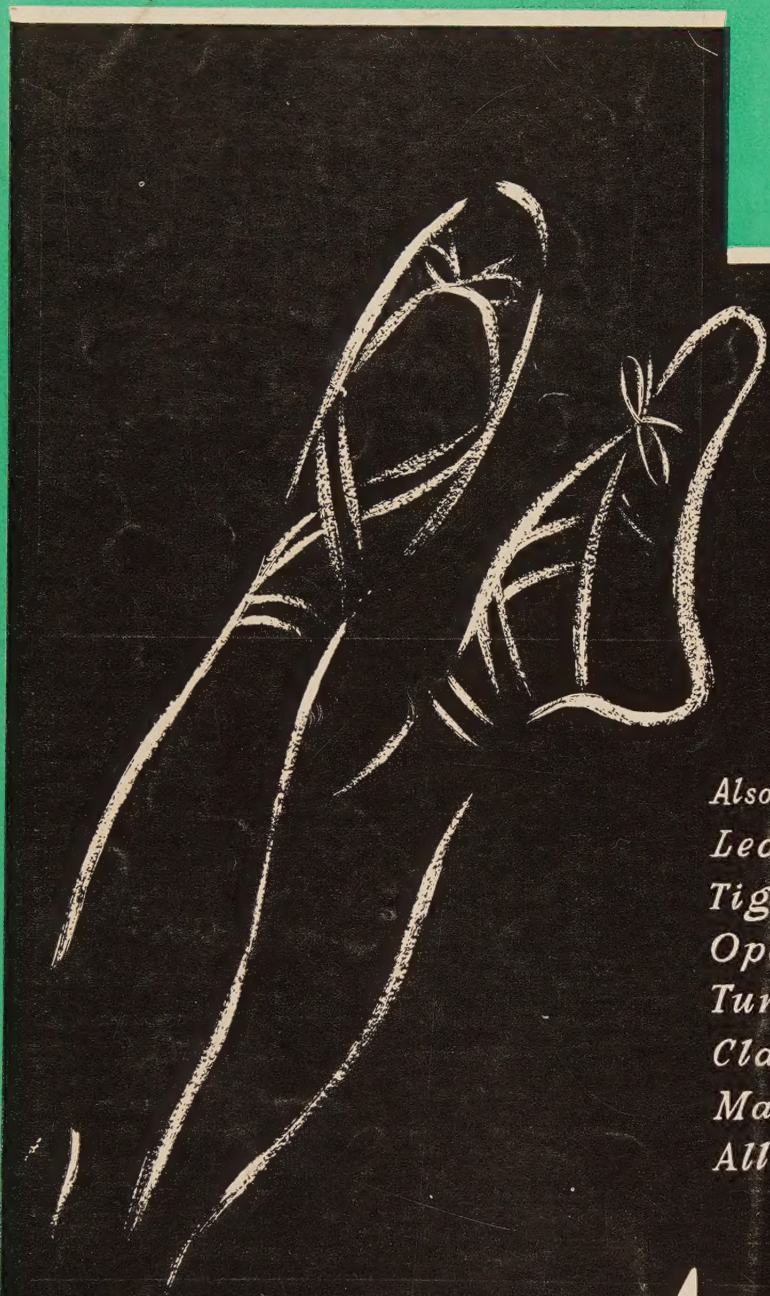
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